Belpahar, Lakhanpur, Lingaraj, Bharatpur, Hingulaand Kalinga opencast mines of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. and Ashoka & Pipanvar opencast mines of Central Coalfields Limited.

(b) In case of surface mine coal is directly cut by surface miners in opencast mines and the cost of cutting & loading into dumper/tippers varies from Rs. 13.25 to 18.97 per tonne in different mines of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited.

There is no manual mining in Mahanadi Coalfields Limited's opencast mines.

In Ashoka opencast project of Central Coalfields Ltd. the awarded rate of extraction of coal / coal measures strata by depbyment of surface miners and other allied equipment on hiring and transporting to a distance of 9-10 km. & unloading is Rs. 56.90 per tonne.

In Piparwar opencast project of Central Coalfields Ltd. the awarded rate of extraction of coal/coal measure strata by deploying surface miners and other allied equipment on hiring basis is Rs. 31.95 per cubic meters.

The cost of production by manual mining in the Bokaro opencast of Central Coalfields Limited is Rs. 600.23 per tonne in 2003-04.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Atenderwas floated in August 2002 for deployment of surface miners at Dugga opencast of Bhatgaon area. This tender was cancelled on administrative grounds.

Installation of Coal Mines Safety Devices

1448. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various experts have made recommendations to fulfil and install numerous coal mine safety devices and practices in our country;

(b) whether it is a fact that none of these recommendations have been implemented in the country;

(c) whether Government are aware of the huge loss of human life in periodic coal mine accidents in the country;

(d) what steps would Government initiate to install all such safety devices to reduce coal mine accidents; and

(e) the specific action proposed in the next six months by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO); (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. It is not a fact.

(c) Government is aware of the loss of life in coal mine accidents and is constantly striving to reduce such loss of life.

(d) Government through Directorate General of Mines Safety have issued guidelines to mine management for implementation of the recommendation in identified thrust area through circulars.

(e) The following specific action is proposed to be taken by Coal India Ltd. (CIL) in this regard in the next six months:—

Inspections of mines from,the safety angle by the line management and mine officials and the Internal SafetyOrganisation for monitoring implementation of Safety practices and operation of safety devices and taking corrective action wherever required.'

Conducting of Safety Audits by extemal experts'in mining/electrical/ mechanical disciplines and implementation of recommendations thereof at an interval of two years and even earlier, if needed.

Continuation of thrust on greater use of quick-setting-cement-grouted/ resin grouted-Roof bolts/steel wire ropes for supporting of roof in development workings as well as in mechanized depillaring districts.

Regular monitoring of mine atmosphere by hand-held gas detectors/ alarms and flame safety lamps for detection of inflammable/noxious gases. Besides computerized continuous mine environmental tele-monitoring in thirteen mines (where they are in operation)

Check surveys byteams of surveyors from different mines/external agencies (are in progress) in some mines to confirm partings between working areas and possible waterlogged areas or to confirm the accuracy of mine plans.

Continuation with the effort at reduction of exposure of workers to mining hazard through mechanization of loading operations by the use of Side-Discharge Loaders / Load-Haul-Dumpers, Powered Support Longwall Faces, Continuous miner technology, etc.

Promoting workers participation in safety through various committees from the mine level. Area level, the company level to the holding company level.

Losses due to Non Increase of Royalty on Coal

†1449. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to increase royalty on coal;

(b) whether it is a fact that despite the increase in prices of coal. States are suffering heavy losses due to non increase in royalty to the States;

(c) whether Government have received any proposal to increase royalty from Madhya Pradesh Government;

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Some of the coal producing states including the Government of Madhya Pradesh, have been writing to the Central Government for enhancing the rate of royalty on coal. Royalty rates on coal were last revised on 16.8.2002 following the recommendation of a Study Group constituted for this purpose. As per Section 9 (3) of the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act 1957, upward review of royalty on coal shall not be done more than once during any period of 3 years. Therefore, the next upward revision of royalty on coal can be made at any time after 15.8.2005 only. There is no corresponding maximum period after which the royalty has to be revised upwards. Hence, the question of loss incurred by the respective State Governments, including Maidhya Pradesh, does not arise.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.